

Excerpts from interrogation of TOGO, Shigenori - 13 March 1946

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- Q. In going back to the subject of liaison conferences, I would like to ask what weight the liaison conferences had in the final decisions of the Japanese government.
- A. The matter must be viewed both from the legal as well as the practical standpoint. The army and navy high command chiefs were directly responsible to the Emperor. The functions of all ministers of state is to "assist and advise" the Throne. The liaison conference is not recognized as a constitutional organ. So from the constitutional point of view, the decisions of the liaison conference do not carry much weight. Therefore, the Cabinet, that is the government, and the steps of the high command and the Imperial Conferences come into the picture; but from the practical point of view, these liaison conferences had weight. The liaison conferences originated with the consultations begun during the 2nd KONOYE Cabinet between the government and the Imperial General Headquarters. It originated from the fact that the military, including the navy were not only interfering in politics, but were exercising such influence as to control and direct politics. Within the government their representatives were the War and Navy Ministers, and outside the Chief of the Army General Staff and the Chief of the Naval General Staff. This organization, the liaison conference, may be said to be a very clear manifestation of the influential position occupied by the armed services.

The formal setup of the liaison conference included as secretaries the Chief Secretary of the Cabinet, who acts according to the ideas of the Prime Minister; the Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau for the army; and the Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau for the Navy. The Foreign Office had no such person among the secretaries, but after I became Foreign Minister I did as much as possible to have a Foreign Office bureau director included.

Decisions relative to the Tripartite Pact, the military advance into South French Indo China, and the decision of the September 6 Imperial Conference were decided upon by the liaison conference. Those decisions were pushed by the army and navy and so established the military dominance in the conference that when it came to the question of war it became increasingly difficult to curb their idea that war was unavoidable.

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Regarding the composition of the liaison conference, I might say that when I became Foreign Minister the only change in membership which took place was the Navy Minister SHIMADA, the Finance Minister KAYA, and myself; all the others were the same. In my thinking there is what you call a momentum that when the question of relaxing our conditions in our negotiations with the United States was brought up, views would be expressed on the basis of the decisions of September 6 saying that conditions could not be relaxed beyond the conditions set forth in those decisions. As I explained before, at my strong insistence and persuasion I had these conditions relaxed but with extreme difficulty. As I have said, the military, or the army and navy, are almost all mighty in the liaison conference. At one time I thought that to entrust such grave decisions to such a body was not just or legitimate under the constitution. I thought that other methods or other means should be used for the purpose. But because of the tremendous influence of the army and navy, and because of no signs of willingness of other ministers or state to strongly oppose the army and navy, my idea did not materialize.

In short, because of the momentum of the military and naval influence which was strong even before my entry into the Cabinet, the decision of the liaison conference which they led in arriving at were, practically speaking, such that it was approved by the Cabinet and even by the Imperial Conference. In other words, practically speaking, the decisions of the liaison conference had such decisive weight. Viewed in the light of the situation, it should be said first of all that the army and navy, and between the two the army had greater weight, and that among the members of the liaison conference those who were members longer exercised more weight than new comers. Therefore, the weight of each member in leading the decisions, as well as the degree of responsibility of the members must be viewed in the light of this situation in the liaison conference.

- Q. In other words, any agreement reached at the liaison conference when presented to the Cabinet would be nothing but a formality for the Cabinet to pass on.
- A. There were exchanges of views on occasions, but there was little if no important changes made in the decisions of the liaison conference.

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東郷茂徳訪問板章 一九四六年三月十三日

第七頁

問、連絡會議問題ニ关ルニ當ツテ、私ハ、日本政府ノ最後の決定ニ對シ連絡會議ガ如何ナル權威ヲ持ツテキタカラ尋ネタイ。

答、本件ハ實際的並ニ法律的立場ノ兩方カラ觀察セラレネバナラナイ。陸海軍統帥部兩總長ハ天皇ニ對シ直接責任ヲ有シテキタ。凡テノ國務大臣ノ職能ハ天皇ヲ「輔弼」スルコトデアル。連絡會議ハ憲法上ノ機關トシテハ認めラレテキナイ。從ツテ憲法上ノ見地カラハ連絡會議ノ決定ハ大シタ權威ハ持タナイ。ソレ故、内閣即チ政府ハ、統帥部並ビニ御前會議トイフ手段カ舞臺ニ現ハレテ來ルガ、實際的見地カラハ、コレヲノ連絡會議ハ權威ヲ持ツテキタ。連絡會議ハ第二次近衛内閣當時政府ト大本營トノ間ニ始メラレタ協議ニ起原シタ、ソレハ海軍ヲモ加ヘタ軍部ガタダニ政治ニ干涉スルノミナラズ、政治ヲ支配シ指導スル程ノ勢力ヲ持ツテキタト云フ事實ニ胚胎シタノデアアル。政府ノ内部ノ代表者ハ陸海軍兩大臣デ、又外部デハ陸軍參謀總長ト海軍軍令部長デアツタ。

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コノ組織、即チ連絡會議ハ軍部ニヨツテ答メ
ラレテキタ勢力アル地位ノ益メテ明白ナ表現
デアルト云フコトカデキル。
連絡會議ノ形式上ノ組織ハ、首相ノ意見ニ從
ツテ勤ク内閣書記官長、陸軍側ハ陸軍軍務局
長、及ヒ海軍側ハ海軍軍務局長ヲ書記官トシ
テ含ンデキタ。外務省ハ此等ノ書記官中ニ代
表者ヲ持タナカツタガ、私ハ外相トナツテカ
ラ外務省ノ局長ヲモ加ヘテ貰フヤウデキルダ
ケ努メタ。三國同盟、南部佛領印度支那ニ對
スル軍事的進出ニ關スル決定、及ビ九月六日
ノ御前會議ノ決定ハ、連絡會議ヲ定メラレタ。
コレラノ決定ハ陸海軍ニヨツテ推シ進メラレ、
連絡會議ニオケル軍部ノ侵越ヲ強ク確立シメ
ノテ戦争ノ問題ニ立到ツタ時、戦争ハ不可避
デアルト云フ軍部ノ考ヲ抑エルコトハ益々困
難ニナツタ。
連絡會議ノ構成ニツイテハ、私ガ外務大臣ニ
ナツタ時、議員、變更ハ、唯島田祿相、賀屋
親相、及ビ私自身デ、他ノ者ハ凡テ同一デア
ツタト云フコトカデキル。米國トノ交渉ニオ
イテ我カ國提出ノ條件ヲ輕減スベシト云フ問
題ガ持出サレタ場合、九月六日ノ決定ニ基イ

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第八頁

テ意見ヲ述ベコノ決定ニ定メラレタ條件以下
ニ條件ヲ輕減スルコトハデキナイト答ヘル如
キ所謂ハヅミトイフモノカアルト私ハ思フ。

前述シタ通り、私ガ強ク主張シ且ツ説得シタ
結果コレヲノ條件ヲ非常ニ困難デハアツタカ、
輕減サセルコトカデキタ。私カ云ツタ通り、
連絡會議デハ軍部・即チ陸海軍カ殆ンド全能
デアツタ。一時ハ私ハ新様ナ國體ニ折衷ナ重
大ナ決定ヲ任セルコトハ、憲法上適法デモナ
ケレバ又正當デモナイト思ツタコトガアツタ。
私ハコノ目的ノタメニハ他ノ方法又ハ他ノ手
段ガ用ヒラルベキダト思ツタ。シカシ陸海軍
ノ悉ルベキ勢力ト、他ノ國務大臣ニハ通シテ
陸海軍ニ強硬ニ反對セントスル様子カ認メラ
レナカツタタメ私ノ考ハ實現サレナカツタ。

要スルニ、私ノ入閣前ニ於イテスラ強カツ
タ陸海軍勢力ノハヅミノタメ、彼ラカ誘導シ
タ連絡會議ノ決定ハ事實上、内閣並ニ御前會
議ニオイテスラ承認セラレルヤウナモノデア
ツタ。誤言スレバ事實上連絡會議ノ決定ハ左
様ナ決定的權威ヲ持ツテキタ。カカル情勢ニ
照ラシテ觀察スルナラバ、先ヅ第一ニ陸海軍、

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衆ニ兩者ノ同デハ陸軍ガヨリ大ナル勢力ヲ持
テ、而シテ連絡會議ノ議員中デハヨリ永ク議
員タリシ者カ新參者ヨリモ一層勢力ヲ持ツテ
キタ。ソレ故議員ノ責任ノ程度並ニ決定ラ
ザル情勢ニ照ラシテ觀察セラレホベナラナイ。
同、決言スレバ、連絡會議デ決メラレタ決定ハ内
閣ニ提出サレタ場合、唯單ニ内閣ヲシテ通過
セシメルタメノ形式ニ過ぎナイノカ常デアツ
タ。

答、新々ハ意見ノ交換モアツタカ、連絡會議ノ決
定ニハ重要ナ修正ハ殆ド又ハ全然加ヘラレナ
カツタ。